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September 25, 1965

Dr. Robert M. Hutchins
Center For The Study of Democratic Institutions
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Dear Dr. Hutchins,

The subject of this letter may not be within your survey, but I am writing on the chance it is and in the hope you may be able to offer some help. I also ask that you keep the letter confidential.

By mid-February I had, under contract, completed a book I believe is described by its title, "The Report On The Warren Report". Coinciding with what to me was a mysterious trip from New York to Washington was an abrupt change in the publisher's attitude toward both the book and me. He abruptly broke his contract, giving no comprehensible reason, although, after receiving the manuscript, he had been raving about a best-seller and his plans for promoting it. Since then the book has been declined by more than 20 publishing houses, including some of the largest and best known. Those who have commented upon it have praised it, highly and unstintingly.

Those who gave reasons included a few who specified they feared the government or its ability to retaliate. Most, including just about all who declined to read it, said they believe there is no interest in the subject and that no book on it could sell. Several said they believed the subject had been "exhausted", yet none could name any book on the Report or any responsible book on the assassination. In several cases, the publisher declined the challenge of his editors that he read the book, saying if he did he feared he'd be tempted to print it. One, before deciding otherwise, even said he thought he could make this the best selling book of the year.

The book is restricted 100% to the Commission's own testimony and exhibits. I believe it destroys the Report, casts considerable doubt on the Commission, shows much of what really did happen, but has only a single explicit conclusion, that the job has not been done and must be, preferably by Congress. Running second only to "fascinating" in the descriptions I have been given is "responsible". It is not a slashing attack on the Commission, whose chairman I still regard as one of the great men in our society.

Should you care to know more, please let me know. The "democratic institution" this sad history reflects most upon is the once-free press. Imagine! More than 20 publishers will not be the first to publish a responsible study of the assassination of a President and the whitewash investigation that followed it, without a single one even implying that the book is either not responsible or unworthy of publication.

While I have no reason for optimism, there are still publishers I have not approached, and I shall never stop trying. I am no longer making singular submissions, as each to whom I offer it knows. I am also quite anxious for its rapid publication, for I fear the appearance of irresponsible works, to which this subject lends itself, and because the crimes are unsolved and the direction in which to look for solution is clear.

Recently, coinciding with submissions to publishers, I have also shown the book to two major newspapers. The Washington Bureau Chief of the New York Times, saying he was quite impressed but didn't really know what he could do, asked and got my permission to forward the book the the assistant managing editor, Harrison Salisbury. Although both the Times and Salisbury are clearly on record in disagreement with mem, I agreed, in the hope Salisbury has an open mind and the Times will be interested, possibly in syndication rights, if not what I believe is the national interest. A Member of the House Judiciary Committee, who has also read it, arranged for the Washington Post's expert to read it. The paper is also on the other side and unwilling to consider the possibility of major error. Nonetheless, I accepted the challenge.

Actually, it is difficult if not impossible to believe the completeness of the Commission's error unless one is willing to read my book and check the Commission's own evidence on which it is based. These things that cannot, even by the most generous, be considered error are of an even worse nature. I tell you these things because I really believe that the work of the Commission itself is not consonant with the functioning of a commission in a demoratic institution. It makes black into white, day into night, right into wrong, with piety, massive documentation of trivia and essentially unnecessary material, and thus, with the assistance of what is perhaps one of the most successful if not the most successful official jobs of flackery, was able to "fool the public", including the press. A study of the manner in which the press was handled and manipulated, which I deal with only slightly in the book, would I think make a fine study of the prostitution of democratic institutions. I am here assuming the free press is such an institution.

What, if anything, you can or might want to do to help me, I do not know. If you can, I certainly will appreciate it. Having to pursue the book through the publishers is taking all my time and precludes other work. We (my wife and I, both of whom have earlier backgrounds that, I think you would agree, qualify us for such a task as this book) have already invested 7,000 hours in it. I have about a third of a million words of notes typed and 22 reels of tape, each running six hours, besides what is stored in my head.

In the event there is nothing you feel you can or should do, I would like to ask you to remember thex possibility of a study by your organization. Perhaps sometime when you are in the east, in either New York of Washington (we are but 30 miles from the Capital) you might care to ask me about this.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg